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Centrality and Peripherality Upside Down? Gender Equality and the Family in Western Europe

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Abstract: The study tries to apply Rokkan's centre/ periphery dichotomy to the analysis of gender equality and the family, which, according to Rokkan, belong to the domain of culture. The final criterion for centrality and peripherality is provided by the level of modernization, gender equality being as such a sign of modernization, while the frequency of new family forms being the criterion for the degree of modernization in the case of the family. According to the indicators used in the study, we can conclude that politico-economic centrality and peripherality do not coincide with centrality and peripherality in the domains of gender equality and the family, the differences in this respect stemming rather from each country's cultural heritage. Amont the politico-economically peripheral countries, the four Nordic countries form the most modernized territory as to gender equality and the family, whereas the southern seaward periphery form the least modernized territory in this respect. Centrality in the domain of economics provides a more or less intermediate position as to the modernization of gender equality and the family.

Introduction

The idea for this study in which I try out the centre/ periphery dichotomy to the analysis of gender equality and the family came to me from Stein Rokkan and his collaborator, who in Economy, Territory, Identity (1983) use the territorial approach to examine differences in collective identity formation (Rokkan &

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Urwin 1983, 1). Although the issues of gender equality and family have also had strong political undertones, they have lacked the powerful territorial aspect that is present in Rokkan's centre/periphery idea. Nevertheless his characterization of the dichotomy is inspiring enough to experiment it an these two topics.

Relating gender equality and the family to Rokkan's framework, we may suggest, first, that both of these belong to the domain of culture, which consists of transfers of messages, norms, life styles, ideologies, myths and ritual systems (Rokkan & Urwin 1983, 2-4). On this basis it may be assumed that centrality and peripherality will in some way appear in gender equality and the family, too, the direction of the flow of codes providing the most important criterion for determining how to order nations an this dimension (see Rokkan & Urwin 1983, 14-15). Although the general idea is clear, it is difficult to establish exactly how the codes of gender equality and the family flow from one country to another; at least no detailed Information is readily available an this. There are, however, some instances which provide convincing evidence of the direction of the flow, perhaps most notably the women's movement. On the basis of a number of documents we know that the women's movement, particularly during its most active years, has advanced from one country to the next very much an the strength of an information flow consisting of personal contacts and written material (Jallinoja 1983). The early years when national women's organizations were set up, thus serve as rough indicators of the advancement of the movement and provide approximate criteria for centrality and peripherality in gender equality, at least at the level of ideas.

Given the difficulty of identifying the direction of the flow of ideas, it is necessary to have some indirect criteria for this purpose. Rokkan provides a useful tool through his examination of centrality and peripherality in the domain of economics; that is, he defines centrality and peripherality ultimately on the basis of indicators of modernization having originated in industrialization (see Rokkan & Urwin 1983, 41-60). Modernization is thus preceived to be a process that, because of its advantageous effects, tends to expand but that nevertheless endows the Initiator countries with leading position (cf. Eisenstadt 1973). The scheme is simple: highly modernized countries are classified in the category of centre, less modernized countries are in the periphery. In each case a key factor is obviously the point of time when the modernization process started, but we may also assume that the boundary between centre and periphery changes as the speed of modernization gives successful peripheral cases a chance to move into the centre. However, Rokkan stresses the stable nature of centrality and peripherality.

This is the perspective we will be adopting in this study: the final criterion for centrality and peripherality is provided by the level of modernization in the domains of gender equality and the family. The next step is to determine the criterion for the modernization of these two domains. In all Western countries

both of them have been changing more or less in the same direction for a long time, and many sociologists have described these tendencies as part of the modernization process (see e.g. Jallinoja 1989a). Gender equality has as such been widely regarded as a sign of modernization, involving various components that signify the disappearance of status differences between women and men (see e.g. Klein 1946, 32; Moberg 1962, 3; Auvinen 1968, 113-120). As far as the family is concerned, the emergence of different family forms has been seen to mark the beginning of the modernization of the family (Macklin 1987, 317); accordingly the frequency of new family patterns serve as useful indicators of centrality and peripherality in this domain. It can be suggested then that the higher the level of gender equality in a country and the more frequent the occurrence of non-traditional family patterns, the more apparently this country occupies a central position in these respects. For the time being we shall omit the question of how far the changes in peripheral countries are due to the flow of ideas from central countries; suffice it to assume that the centrality vs. peripherality of a position is dependent an the early start of gender equality and new family forms.

The analysis that follows looks at the same Western European countries that Rokkan examined, and it employs the classification proposed by Rokkan between central and peripheral countries (Rokkan & Urwin 1983, 43). To make it easier for the reader to follow the comparisons, the central countries: Germany, France, Britain, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy and Denmark, are indicated in the Tables (and in some places in the text) in boldface. The peripheral countries of Western Europe are Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The main question that we set out to answer is: How far does the territorial division based an the economic domain coincide with the centre/periphery division in the domains of gender equality and the family, which have been affected by modernization much later than the economic sphere?

Centrality and peripherality in gender equality

We start by briefly looking at the years when the women's movement began to grow up in selected Western European countries and when it played a central role in initiating gender equality issues. This sort of classification provides an historical perspective which is analogical to the one employed by Rokkan in his own analysis: the argument is that centrality develops over a long period of time and is therefore dependent on an early start.

Women's liberation organizations in Western Europe were founded in three waves: the First came in 1865-71 (Germany, France, Austria, Britain and Denmark), followed by a second wave in 1884-89 (Finland, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands) and finally by a third around the turn of the century in

1898-1907 (Italy and Belgium) (Jallinoja 1983, 28). As we can see, the countries where the women's movement got off to an early start, are the same that according to Rokkan occupy a central position in Europe. In these cases early modernization and centrality in the domain of economics has gone hand in hand with early modernization in the domain of gender equality, at least at the level of ideas. There are, however, some exceptions which may anticipate further irregularities in centrality and peripherality. For example, Italy and Belgium fall under opposite poles in the domains of economics (centre) and the women's movement (periphery). The second group of nations is an interesting case: although the women's movement started to make an organized presence in the Northern periphery some 20 years later than in Central Europe, it was in the Nordic countries where gender equality was to move an to achieve the most remarkable results.

Another important landmark in women's emancipation was female suffrage. Here, too, there is much variation between different European countries. With the notable exception of France, the countries in the ferst or second wave of the women's movement saw the introduction of universal suffrage around the First World War (sec Table 1); in other words, an early start correlates fairly well with the early introduction of suffrage. To sec how far this propitious historical background influences gender equality at later times, we now divide our countries into two categories: a centre consisting of these countries where female suffrage was instituted around the First World War (mainly just after the war), and a periphery consisting of these countries where it was introduced much later. In our descriptions of contemporary gender equality the focus is on three indicators only; this is to ensure that the analysis covers a sufficient number of Western European countries. Although this acts to simplify our analysis somewhat, it is fair to say that it provides a reasonably solid basis for interpretations of the relationship between the politico- economic domain and gender equality on the centre/periphery dimension.

As we can sec an early female suffrage has not necessarily entailed high scores in gender equality at later times, but the Nordic countries are well compatible with our hypothesis. We can also note that gender equality has not advanced evenly an all fronts; in fact quite the opposite is true: in some spheres (such as university education) women have made impressive headway, in others (such as politics) progress has been slower. Widespread gender equality in one sector serves to reduce differences between individual nations as is clearly demonstrated in Table 1 by the case of university education. Similarly, a high level of gender equality in this sector may distort an otherwise fully coherent model. This is seen particularly in the cases of Spain, and Greece, where there is full equality between men and women in enrolment into universities but where other indicators manifest much less gender equality. The uneven development in different sectors of gender equality obviously undermines the relevance of the centre/periphery distinction but, on the other

Table l:
Gender equality as measured by selected indicators in Western European countries, around 1987.

Country	Women at universities[1]	Employed women aged 30-34[2]	Female MPs[3]	Sum indicators[4]
Centre				
Finland[5] (1906)	100	87	63	250
Norway (1913)	100	79	69	248
Denmark (1915)	94	89	58	241
Britain (1918)	84	63	13	160
Austria (1918)	88	62	23	173
Ireland (1918)	98	40	17	155
Germany (1919)	76	62	31	169
Netherlands (1919)	80	54	40	174
Luxembourg (1919)	60	54	28	142
Sweden (1921)	100[6]	90	57	247
Periphery				
Portugal	100	74	15	189
Spain (1931)	100	49	13	162
France (1944)	100	72	13	185
Belgium (1944)	84	63	14	162
Italy (1945)	96	60	26	182
Greece (1952)	100	51	9	160
Switzerland (1972)	76	49	28	153

[1] Source: Statistical Yearbook 1991. Unesco 1991, 3-272-277. Indicators Show the percentages of female students of male students at universities and comparable institutions around 1988; the value 100 indicates full gender equality or overrepresentation of females.

[2] Source: Höpflinger 1990, 26-27. Indicators show the percentage of employed women in the age group 30-34 in 1987.

[3] Source: The World's Women 1970-1990. Trends and Statistics. United Nations 1991, 39. Percentage of female MPs of male MPs, in 1987; the value 100 indicates full gender equality.

[4] The sum indicator is the sum of three indicators demonstrating "overall" gender equality.

[5] Source: The World's Women 1970-1990. Trends and Statistics. United Nations 1991, 39.

[6] Statistisk årsbok 1991, 366-367.

hand, differences between countries are this much distinguished and consistent that we may regard centre/periphery distinction as justifiable.

The variation of gender equality in different sectors is to be seen as a manifestation of the process through which gender equality tends to move on. Political rights (e.g. female suffrage) seem to initiate the process, followed by educational equality and then by equality in employment rates. The final and most difficult stage in this process is gender equality in higher societal positions. Indicators seen in Table 1 serve as evidence of this sort of phased process: The scores are systematically highest in the domain of education, next highest in employment and lowest in power positions. Despite this general rule, gender equality has, in some countries, advanced even in the two last mentioned sectors to that extent that differences between nations have evolved great. The difference between the lowest and highest scores in female wage employment (50) and in the domain of politics (60) really warrants a distinction between nations central and peripheral. High scores in the domain of education most probably anticipate future changes in other areas of gender equality as well, for the research evidence indicates that highly educated women take a more active part in working life and in general are more strongly in favour of gender equality than less educated women (sec c.g. Mikrozensus Jahres-ergebnisse 1990, 66; Jallinoja 1989b, 49).

The final classification into centre and periphery is made an the basis of a sum indicator, which suggests a distinction of West European countries into three categories. The first of three clearly stands out from the others and is considered to represent the centre (sum scores around 250). The rest of the countries do not differ from each other very much, but nevertheless a distinction can be made between two categories, i.e. intermediate countries (sum scores 189-169) and peripheral countries (sum scores 162-142).

The classification in Table 2 suggests an almost complete reversal of the politico-economic distinction between centrality and peripherality when we move into the domain of gender equality. The four Nordic countries form a more or less coherent territory where equality is highly advanced in several gender issues; in this respect they are well ahead of both the continental centre and the seaward peripheries as outlined by Rokkan. Centrality in the politico-economic domain thus seems to afford only a fairly moderate level of gender equality in spite of the early start of the women's movement in many of three countries. It can thus be concluded that gender equality is relatively independent of the country's politico-economic position; or possibly that they are inversely related, as countries that have prospered wich the early start of modernization have been able to uphold and reinforce the housewife ideology that was so typical of the early stage of industrialization (sec e.g. Houghton 1957; Kraditor 1965; Shorter 1977, 224-231). This, however, only explains the situation in some continental countries; it is not a valid factor in the case of such late-industrialized seaward countries as Spain, Portugal, Ireland and

Table 2:

Western European countries divided into three groups with regard to gender equality an the basis of the indicators presented in Table 1.

Centre	Intermediate	Periphery
Finland	Portugal	**Belgium**
Norway	**Italy**	**Britain**
Denmark	**France**	Spain
Sweden	**Netherlands**	**Switzerland**
	Austria	Greece
	Germany	Ireland
		Luxembourg

Greece, where the relatively strong housewife culture is explained by religion. It is also reasonable to assume that the strong role of the state - manifested in public services for employed women and their children - explains at least part of the differences in gender equality. For example, all the Nordic countries have in place a comprehensive public day care system which allows women to get a job an the labour market (Social Security in the Nordic Countries 1993, 71).

Finally, to try to see how far peripherality in gender equality has created a spirit of opposition to tendencies visible in the centre, we shall look at three indicators that measure attitudes towards gender equality. One of these indicators identifies a general attitude (women should have more freedom to do what they want to do), while the other two concern the same topics as were discussed above, namely women's wage employment and female MPs. As in Table 1, we have a sum indicator here to provide a general measure of the mental climate with regard to gender equality. Comparing the percentages in the second and third columns with the figures shown in Table 1, we may observe that the proportions of those favouring gender equality in the apportionment of responsibilities in employment and household chores between the spouses tend to be higher than the employment rates among women aged 30-34, i.e. the age at which women are most likely to be at home looking after their children, particularly in those countries where female employment rates are relatively low (Ireland, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece). However, even these differences are not as conspicuous as those between attitudes towards female MPs and the actual percentages of female MPs. This is an interesting discovery: at the level of attitudes people appear to have equal confidence in female and male MPs, but this is not yet reflected in their voting behaviour. In some countries (e.g. France and Britain) the difference is largely explained by the electoral system, for one-delegate constituencies do not favour

Table 3:

Proportions of those wanting more freedom for women to do what they want to do, of those preferring full or almost full gender equality in employment responsibilities and in the apportionment of household chores between spouses, and of those seeing female MPs equal to male MPs, as% in 1987 and 1990.

	More freedom for women[1] (1990)	Equality in employment and housework[2] (1987)	Female MPs equal to male MPs[3] (1987)	Sum indicators
Country				
Centre				
Denmark*	58	78	86	222
Intermediate				
Portugal	38	67	63	168
Italy	48	72	59	179
France	51	74	68	193
Netherlands	59	70	79	208
Germany	69	63	65	197
Periphery				
Belgium	47	64	67	178
Britain	79	80	75	234
Spain	57	65	67	189
Greece	52	72	58	182
Ireland	78	54	61	193
Luxembourg	49	50	62	161

* No data are available on non-EC members: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Austria and Switzerland.

[1] Source: Eurodata 1990, 26. The Proportion of those who agreed with the Statement "Women should have more freedom to do what they want to do".

[2] Source: Gabriel 1992, 571. The proportion of those who agree with the statements "In a family in which both spouses are equally responsible for employment, equality in the apportionment of household chores and child care between spouses should prevail" and "In a family in which wife's job is less demanding than husband's job, wife should take more responsibility for household chores and child care than husband".

[3] Source: Gabriel 1992, 559. The proportion of those who responded that "They have equal confidence in male and female MPs".

women. Nevertheless, it is clear from people's attitudes that peripherality in gender equality does not create opposition against tendencies carried into effect

in the centre; an the contrary, in the vast majority of peripheral countries people are willing to move an towards the model applied in the centre.

Centrality and peripherality in the family domain

Ever since the 1960s sociological debates have been showing signs of a reorientation to the family. This has led to a revised perception of what is to be seen as representing traditional and modern family forms. In the 1950s, Talcott Parsons and many of his contemporaries defined the modern family as a unit consisting of father, mother and their children; this had become the dominant family form in industrialized society. Although this interpretation was later criticized by Peter Laslett, for instance, who an the Basis of empirical evidence proved that the nuclear family had been a prevalent family pattern in Europe for centuries (Laslett 1972), it remained a commonplace notion that the intimate nuclear family is a modern phenomenon. Edward Shorter was one of the many writers who adhered to this interpretation in the mid-1970s (Shorter 1977), but theie were also sociologists who were ready to suggest a new view on the modern family.

Eleanor Macklin defines the traditional family pattern as a "legal, lifelong, sexually exclusive marriage between one man and one woman, with children, where the male is primary provider and ultimate authority" (Macklin 1987, 317). This was exactly the same as the definition of the 1950s; so what was modern in those days had now become traditional. The change was due to the emergence of new family forms which were interpreted by many sociologists and commentators as omens of a new era. This was reason enough for the terminological shift: what was now new was to be perceived as modern or nontraditional, and what was no longer new was to become traditional. The lot of the nuclear family was to stand alone an one side of the line of demarcation; an the other side were nontraditional or alternative family forms, defined by Macklin as never-married singlehood, cohabitation, voluntary childlessness, single-parenthood, binuclear families, stepfamilies, divorce, remarriage, extramarital relationships, same-sex intimate relationships and multiadult households (Macklin 1987, 318).

Sociologists began to show a growing interest in these alternatives, focusing on the experiences that people had had in these new family forms (Jallinoja 1994, 17-19). However, the non-traditional family was soon renamed as the postmodern era provided a convenient frame of reference. Shorter was among the First writers to refer to the postmodern family, describing it as "the free-floating couple" (Shorter 1977, 263-272), but it was not until the early 1990s that we saw more elaborated discussions of the postmodern family. Its characterizations suggest that the postmodern family actually resembles the family patterns that some time ago were called non-traditional or modern; the only difference is that the postmodern family is described more as an amoebic

social unit stemming from perpetual changes in its boundaries and structures (sec Stacey 1991).

The frequencies of alternatives to the traditional family (the nuclear family) serve as criteria for the modernization of the family domain and consequently, also as criteria for centrality and peripherality. Lacking statistical data an many alternative family forms and lifestyles (multiadult households, same-sex couples and voluntary childlessness, which according to the data available range from almost zero to a couple per cent; sec e.g. Sussman & Steinmetz 1986; Campbell 1985) we have to concentrate an just a few indicators, which nevertheless are sufficient to bring out the main differences between the countries concerned. These indicators are divorce rates, the proportion of never-married women in age groups 25-29 and 45-49, and the proportion of extra-marital live births. The countries have been grouped into three categories according to the ranking position each country gained in respect of gender equality (sec Table 2).

The proportion of never-married females in the age group 45-49 shows that marriage is by no means an outdated institution; the same conclusion is suggested by the figures for women aged 30-34, where the percentage of these who have never married ranges from a low 14% (Spain) to 40% (Sweden) (Demographic Yearbook 1990, 918-939). The relatively high frequencies of single women in the age group 25-29 are an indication of delayed marriages and (in many countries) of cohabitation rather than singlehood. Cohabitation is now very common among young people in Sweden and Denmark: the figures are 48 (1985) and 44% (198088), respectively, among females aged 25-29 years (Rallu & Blum 1991, 436, 124). In other countries for which the relevant data are available, cohabitation is not as popular; in France, for example, 19% of all couples in the age group 25-29 who lived together in 1986 were not officially married (Rallu & Blum 1991, 30), and in 1990 the figure among Austrian men in the saure age group was 7% (Rallu & Blum 1991, 213). Norway and Finland lie in-between these extremes: in 1988 the proportion of cohabitants among all 27 year-old women living in a union in Norway was 31% (Rallu & Blum 1991, 142), and in Finland in 1989, the figure for women aged 27-31 years was 21% (Väestö 1991:1, 31). All these figures show that the frequencies of cohabitation are consistent with other indicators of the degree modernization in the family domain.

The number of live births outside marriage provides evidence of more or less the same thing as the proportions of never-marrieds in the age group 25-29, but adds one further aspect to the modernization of the family. High frequencies of such births are not an indication of a growing number of single mothers, but rather of the increasing popularity of cohabitation even in situations where

Table 4.
Proportions of never-married females aged 25-29 and 45-49, and of live births out of wedlock as %, and divorce rates around 1989.

Country	Never-married females aged 25-29	45-49[1]	Live births out of wedlock[2]	Divorce rates[3]	Sum indi-cators
Centre					
Finland	44	10	25	13	92
Norway	43	5	34	11	93
Denmark	54	5	46	13	118
Sweden	64	9	52	11	136
Intermediate					
Portugal	17	8	15	4	44
Italy	..	..	6	2	..
France	38	7	30	8	83
Netherlands	40	5	11	8	64
Austria	44	..	24	9	..
Germany	37	6	10	8	61
Periphery					
Belgium	27	..	9	9	..
Britain	35	5	28	12	54
Spain	30	8	9	2	49
Switzerland	42	9	6	8	65
Greece	..	..	2	..	..
Ireland	36	9	14	–	59
Luxembourg	36	7	13	19	66

[1] Source: Demographic Yearbook 1990, 918-938 except for Finland Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja 1991; for Portugal Estatisticas Demográficas 1988, 33; for Austria Mikrozensus Jahresergebnisse 1990, 118 and Demographisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 1990, 56 (the proportion of divorced and widowed people has been estimated by using the corresponding figures from Finland, which in other respects resembles Austria); for Belgium Statistiques Demographiques 1990, 134.

[2] Demographic Statistics 1992, Eurostat, 1992, 82, except for Finland Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja 1991; for Norway, Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland European Population, Vol. 1. 1991.

[3] For Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden, Yearbook of Nordic Statistics 1992, 67; for ltaly, France, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Ireland and Luxembourg, Demographic Statistics 1992, Eurostat, 1992, 123; for Portugal, Estatisticas Demográficas 1988, 33; for Austria, Demographisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 1990, 57 and Mikrozensus Jahresergebnisse 1990, 137; for Spain, Demographic Yearbook 1990, 748-749, 914-939. Divorce rates as ratio of annual divorces per 1000 married couples or married women.

couples have a child. This is now the case in Sweden and Denmark, but it is also relatively common in Finland, where only 6 per cent of all live births are actually for single mothers (Väestö 1992:1, 67). This figure is similar to Italy's, for example (6% live births are out of wedlock), where cohabitation is not yet as institutionalized as it is in the Nordic countries (Rallu & Blom 1991, 368). In other words, single motherhood is as yet not a very popular alternative family pattern, even though it may be somewhat more common than before. At least it has attracted quite considerable public attention both in the mass media and in sociological inquiry.

Divorce rates vary to a lesser extent than the other two indicators in Table 4. Unlike the other two indicators, the dissolution of marriage implies, in itself, an alternative family pattern; first, one-parent families (if the couple has children) and second, stepfamilies as a result of remarriages. The proportion of one-parent families was in 1982 highest in Sweden at around 26%, but generally the figure is in the region of 10 per cent or less (Höpflinger 1990, 35). Stepfamilies are less frequent than one-parent families; in Finland, for example, the proportion of stepfamilies of all families with children under 18 years in 1986 was 7% (Elinolot 1989:1, 121), in Germany 7.5 per cent (1982) and in Britain about 5 per cent (1982) (Höpflinger 1990, 35).

Table 5:

Western European countries divided into core centre, centre, intermediate and periphery in the family domain according to the sum indicators of Table 4.

Core centre	Centre	Intermediate	Periphery
Sweden	Norway	**Netherlands**	Ireland
Denmark	Finland	**Luxembourg**	Spain
	Austria	**Switzerland**	**Belgium**
	France	**Germany**	Portugal
	Britain		**Italy**

As to the attitudes towards the family, we have to rely an not so up-to-date data. According to surveys conducted in 1981, Western Europeans quite unanimously regarded highly the traditional type of family and marriage. The proportions of those who were of the opinion that marriage is an outdated institution varied between 12 (Ireland) and 29 percent (France), while the proportions of those who agreed with the statement "A child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily" varied from 55 (Denmark) to 90 percent (Italy). Additionally, the majority of Western Europeans regarded faithfulness as very important for a successful marriage; the percentages ranged from 72 (France) to 89 (Ireland). (Harding et al. 1986, 120-121.) All

these figures indicate that the prevailing attitudes do not favour the modernization of the family as in the Gase of gender equality; there attitudes are much more in favour of modernization. This may also mean that peripherality in the family domain does not breed such an aspiration for central position as in the case of gender equality.

If we then move on to look at how centrality in the economic domain implies centrality in the family domain (sec Table 5), we can note that they are not consistent with each other. In the same way as in the case of gender equality, centrality in the domain of economics typically implies an intermediate position; the necessary exceptions to this rule are Belgium and Italy. Peripherality in the economic domain, then, divides our countries into two opposite groups, as was the case in gender equality: one of them forms part of the centre (the Nordic countries), the other the majority of the periphery (seaward countries).

Conclusions

One of the main results of this study is that politico-economic centrality and peripherality do not coincide with centrality and peripherality in the domains of gender equality and the family. This would appear to be at variance with the prevailing view that the modernization of gender relationships and the family is essentially bound up with societal modernization. In the long run and in general this has indeed been true and therefore we can regard all of them as parallel tendencies (sec e.g. Jallinoja 1989a), but upon closer inspection we find clear evidence of incongruous trends.

Without going into details and exceptions we can draw some general conclusions about the relationship of the economic domain to gender equality and the family domain. Peripherality in gender equality and the family domain seems furthermore to be connected with peripherality in the economic domain, but it is obviously caused by strong religiousness as well. In fact, this may be the factor that explains the differences between nations more than the level of societal modernization whose influence seems to be more indirect. The predominant denomination is Catholic in those countries where the gender relations and the family are less modernized, whereas Protestantism prevails in those countries where these two domains are most modernized. Catholism and Protestantism thus serve as a fairly clear line of demarcation, but in many parts of Central Europe the influence of Catholism is weakened by a high level of societal modernization. It also seems to be the fact that Catholism as such is not sufficient to promote peripherality in the family and gender equality, instead it is religiousness of ordinary people that counts for this. For example, France is a Catholic country but in spite of this it does not belong to the periphery in the domains of the family and gender issues. Low church attendance rate (17

percent attended church once a month or more often in 1982) compared to high church attendance rate in Ireland (88 percent) create quite different moral atmospheres in these countries, the first one favouring gender equality and the modernization of the family more than the latter one (sec Inglehart 1990, 51, 190). The significance of the religion and religiousness is based an the dominant role the Church has had in defining moral norms concerning behaviors in family and gender matters; in this respect, the role of the Catholic Church has remained as before more obviously than in the case of the Protestant Churches. Because the norms and values of the Church has been traditional (or they have been labelled as traditional), it is quite natural that those who are religious tend to be inclined to traditional values and behaviours. In our scheme this means peripherality.

The sociological discussion on the relationship of the family and gender equality has stressed their positive correlation. The connection of these two domains has come out in the anti-feminist and familistic sociological literature that speaks against the modernization of the gender relationship and the family (sec e.g. Lasch 1982; Berger and Berger 1984) as well as in the feminist literature that is inclined to favour gender equality and alternative family patterns. Although the long-term trends in these domains have also been in the same direction and given ground to talk about parallel processes, there are certain irregularities which justify the conclusion that these domains are also relatively independent of each other. To compare the countries of Western Europe in this respect, we have crosstabulated gender equality and the family with regard to the position occupied by each country an the dimension of centrality and peripherality by using the classifications presented in Tables 2 and 5.

Ten out of the seventeen countries (59°Io) occupy a "logical" place, which is consistent with the argument that gender equality correlates positively wich the modernization of the family, or at least that they tend to change simultaneously. The rest of the countries can be divided into two groups; the larger group consists of those countries where the modernization of the family is more pronounced than gender equality (Austria, France, Britain, Switzerland and Luxembourg), while the other group consists of those countries where the situation is the opposite (Portugal and Italy). According to these results it would seem that the family is the domain where modernization is more apparent than in the gender relationship, or perhaps more correctly, irrespective of how far gender equality has advanced.

The comparison presented in Figure 1 is based an our classification of the countries of Western Europe into centre, intermediate and periphery without taking into account the distance to the extreme poles in both domains. This means that centrality in the domain of gender equality may be "more central" than centrality in the domain of the family or vice versa. If we take into account the degree of modernization by giving 100 points to the highest scores of the

Figure 1. Location of Western European countries in centre, intermediate and periphery in the domain of gender equality and the family.

THE FAMILY

GENDER EQUALITY	Core centre or Centre	Intermediate	Periphery
Centre	Sweden **Denmark** Norway Finland		
Intermediate	**Austria** **France**	**Netherlands** **Germany**	Portugal **Spain**
Periphery	**Britain**	**Luxembourg** **Switzerland**	**Belgium** Spain Greece Ireland

sum indicators in each domain (Finland in the case of gender equality and Sweden in the domain of the family), the results will look different. As we can sec in Table 6, the relative difference between the countries with regard to the degree of modernization is greater in the domain of the family than in the case of gender equality. Second, we can sec that the modernization of the gender relationship has advanced further than in the domain of the family; in some cases the relative difference in this respect is quite remarkable (Portugal, Italy and Greecc). Other countries belonging to this group are Finland, Norway, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland, France and Luxembourg. In the rest of the countries (Austria, Denmark, Britain and Sweden) the modernization of gender equality and the family has advanced at more or less the same rate. There is no country where the modernization of the family goes ahead of gender equality. These results open up an additional perspective on the relationship between gender equality and the family. If we look at the relative distance of each country from the top position in both domains, then gender equality tends to advance more apparently than (and to a certain extent irrespective of) the degree of modernization of the family, mostly because of the late start of the latter process, but also because the majority of

people oppose the far-going modernization of the family. As was seen above, most Western Europeans still very much appreciate the nuclear family and marriage.

Table 6.
Relative position of Western European countries with regard to the modernization of gender equality and the family.*

Country	Gender equality		Family
Difference			
Finland	100	65	35
Norway	99	69	30
Sweden	99	100	-1
Denmark	96	89	7
Portugal	76	28	48
France	74	59	15
Italy	73	(28)	(45)
Netherlands	70	46	24
Austria	69	61	8
Germany	68	43	25
Spain	65	35	30
Belgium	65	35	30
Britain	64	59	5
Greece	64	(24)	(40)
Ireland	62	(40)	(22)
Switzerland	61	44	17
Luxembourg	57	46	11
Difference as % points		43	76

* The relative position has been calculated on the basis of the sum indicators shown in Tables 1 and 4 and by giving the value 100 to the highest scores.

As to the territorial aspect in the domains of gender equality and the family, we have to conclude that it is not as apparent as in the politico-economic domain where Central Europe constitutes the core area. Additionally, it needs to be stressed that gender equality and the family have to be examined separately in this respect owing to their relative independence. As Figure 2 demonstrates, there are only a few Gases where Western European countries constitute clearly visible cultural territories consisting of several neighbouring countries. One such territory is represented by the Nordic countries, which all

Figure 2: GENDER EQUALITY

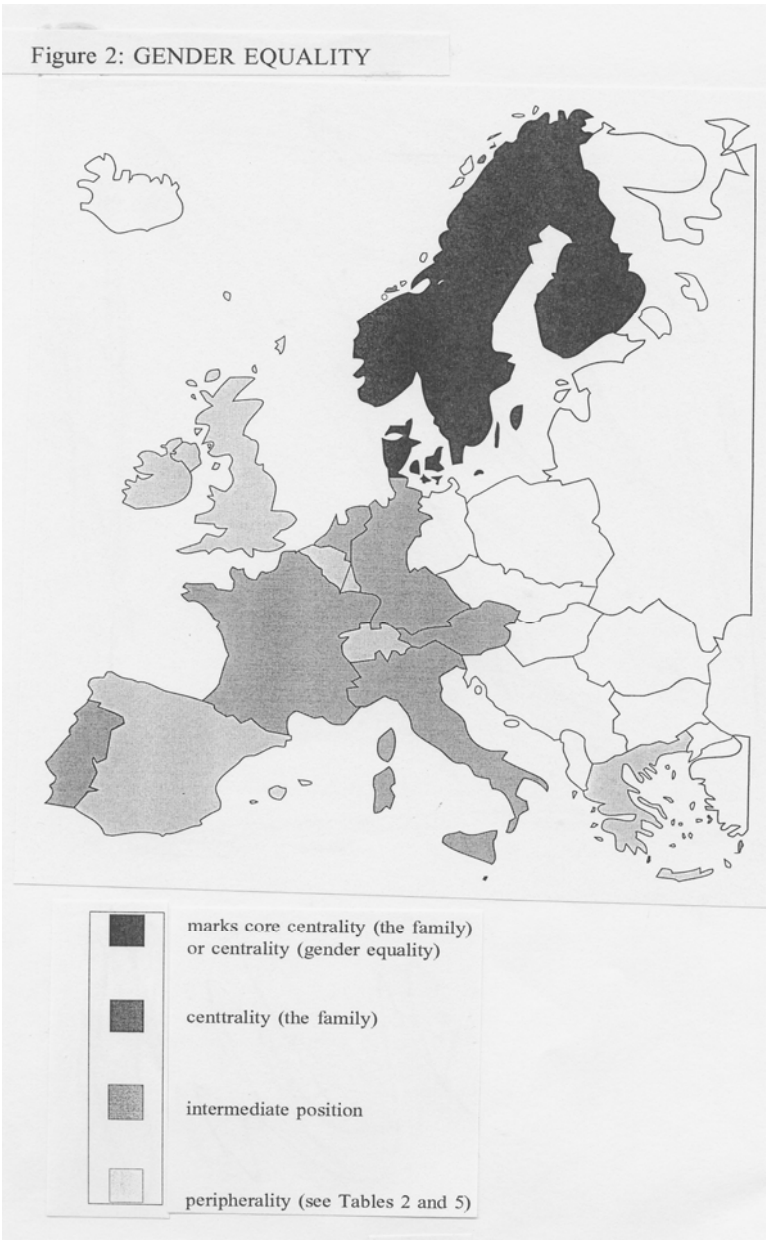
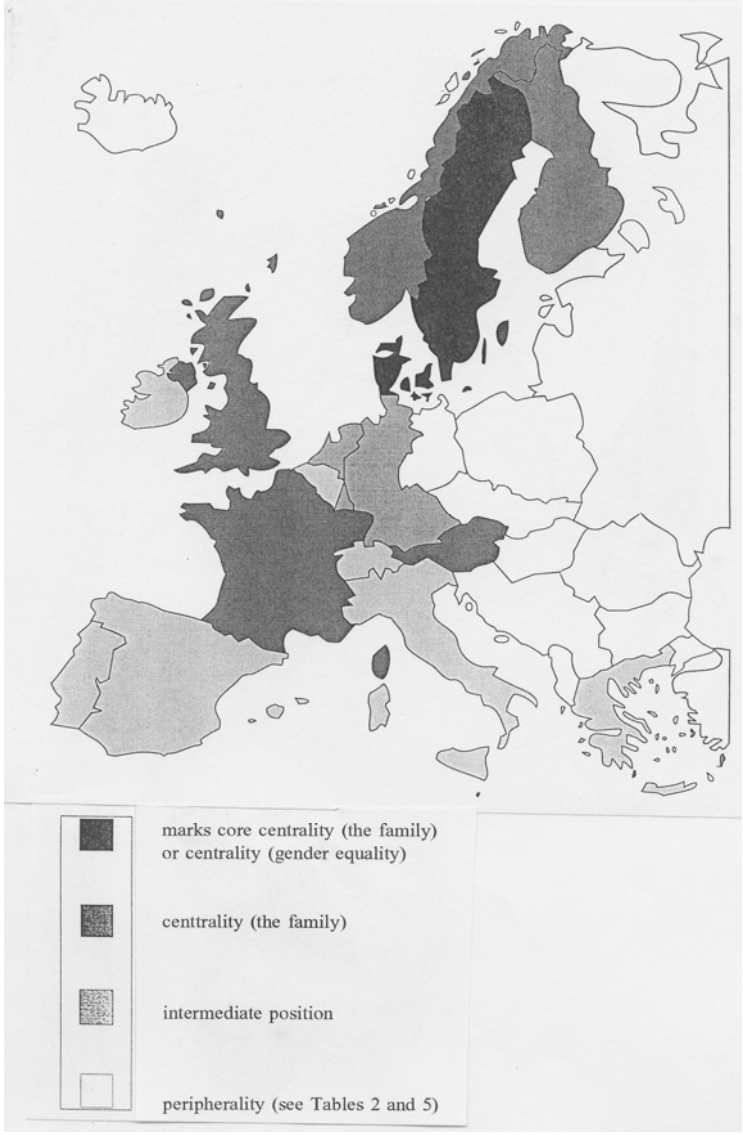


Figure 2: THE FAMILY



have a high level of gender equality; indeed this region can be legitimately described as a unified cultural area. A similar cultural coherence can also be seen in the countries that Rokkan classified as seaward periphery: because of the slow modernization of the family, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece form a culturally homogeneous territory.

In all other respects it is difficult to trace any homogeneous territories, especially wich regard to the family trends. In the case of gender equality, Central Europe is fairly coherent, mainly because of its intermediate position with the exception of Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Central Europe is more split in the domain of the family, which also concerns the Nordic countries albeit to a lesser extent. All these results suggest the assumption that national cultural heritage is a more important factor than connections between neighbouring countries; that heritage creates a relatively unique cultural climate in each country. Accordingly, we can suggest that the simple flow of codes which defines family trends and gender equality is not a decisive factor behind the factual trends in development; rather those trends are construed out of cultural climates, irrespective of the flow of codes that has been continuing for decades.

lf we accept the argument that the flow of codes in the cases of gender equality and the family is not a decisive factor, then we have also to conclude that the concepts of centrality and peripherality are less relevant than in the politico-economic domain, where material affluence and political dominance more easily create preconditions for hierarchic relationships. Instead of the concepts of centrality and peripherality, there is better justification to use such terms as avantgarde or vanguard, an the one hand, and late-comers, an the other. Modernization would thus be a continuous process in respect to which even the countries of Western Europe differ from each other, with some countries acting as forerunners of change and others following at a shorter or longer distance. However, there is reason to believe that the flow of codes concerning gender equality may assume increasing importance in the future as efforts are intensified to strengthen gender equality through the European Union for example. This will bring more equality among the European societies in this respect and call into question the relevance even of the terms forerunner and late-comer.

Modernization now distinguishes different countries from each other, but there are also intra-national distinctions, as we can sec from many of the indicators presented above, dividing people in each country into those who are inclined to modern conduct and those who are more inclined to make traditional choices. As modernization is a universalizing process by nature, modern people in all countries resemble each other. The same applies most probably to traditionality as well, although its content may vary more than in the case of modernity. Cultural peculiarities thus spring from an inclination to favour either modernity or traditionality, which in practice is seen in the

proportions of modern people. However, more detailed qualitative information is needed on the cultural and political conditions that contribute to the favourable preconditions for either type of inclination. As mentioned above, religion is one important factor that regulates inclination to modernity, but the other thing is to explain why the significance of religion varies so much in Western European countries. We can also suggest the assumption that secularized countries may develop new types of norms and Values that will regulate the modernization of the family in their own way. For example, liberal divorce laws such as in Finland already include detailed regulations for arrangements that aim at guaranteeing the realization of the principle "each child shall have a right for both parents" (see Gottberg-Talve 1990).

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